

Sarah Moon



# Sarah **Moon**

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Preface by Sarah Moon  
Afterword by Robert Delpire



**Thames & Hudson** PHOTOFILE

## PREFACE

*The Photofile series is the original English-language edition of the Photo Poche collection. It was conceived and produced by the Centre National de la Photographie, Paris. Robert Delpire is the creator and managing editor of the series, in collaboration with Benoît Rivero, assistant director.*

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One winter's day on the beach, a gull flew into my viewfinder from the right – it looked at me, it flew away, I forgot about it. A long time later, on the contact sheet of a film I thought I'd lost, I discovered it, or rediscovered it; there were other gulls in the distance, rocks and the sea, but it was as if there was nothing else there, nothing but the gull, on its own, centred in the 24 x 36 frame, completely unexpected, right in front of me, less than a metre away, its gaze fixed on me, slowing in its flight, one wing blurred and the other sharp, one wing in shadow and the other in light, holding its balance, for just a 15th of a second – perhaps a 30th of a second, I no longer know – the sky was overcast and grey, the gull hung above the stone balustrade, so it must have been close to the hotel, but I no longer know, I don't know if I even saw it, a miracle, a mirage, or a sign from heaven, a symbol of chance, mystery, or the magic of photography... coincidences...

On another day, in the Jardins de Bagatelle in Paris, a peacock came out of somewhere and spread its tail behind me, while I was busy working, my eyes riveted to the polka-dot dress that Martha was wearing; there were only two more shots left in the camera, which was a sign in itself, I had my back turned to the image, to beauty; it wasn't where I was looking for it. For years, I had looked for it only in studios, that was my career; I only ever saw it adorned, dressed, made up, styled and beribboned, in the fashion of the day – so many

masks, so many traps, so many holes in the net that I had to pass through in order to approach it, to feel that emotion, so many tricks that I had to see through in order to be impressed by it, in both the literal and figurative sense.

In this world of illusion, moments are rare. For a moment to become reality, it needs to have a 'before' and an 'after', it needs to be created but forgotten, in order to be found again. In this case, where everything was prepared, it was nonetheless in the unexpected that the gull was hiding – it was hiding in a stray glance between two poses, in a chance gesture, in a burst of laughter, in a false step; it was hiding in a sign of life at the edge of the frame, in the wind from the fans, in the shadow of the lights, in harmony or disharmony, but always in the fugitive and the ephemeral, the butterfly of misfortune, the stigmata of time. Someone once said – I think it was Paul Valéry – that 'beauty is that which makes us despair'.

There are few photographs that I recognize from those years, because I have changed and I no longer see the way I used to. 'To have been always what I am – and so changed from what I was,' says Winnie from her pile of sand. 'Happy days...' Mike Yavel was my assistant, my friend, my left eye. He died tragically. Our partnership lasted fifteen years. Without him, it wasn't the same any more. But I continued: life dances on... I remember snow falling one night, and in the morning, when I woke up, I did something I'd never done before, driven by some need, I photographed the hortensias in the garden, shrouded in white. It was no longer myself, but life that was telling the story; with a push of the finger on the shutter release, in the blink of an eye and a fraction of a second, I made it my own. It was then that it all began. I had taken a photograph for myself, whereas before I never dared unless asked to do so. If you go to the ball, you have to dance... the ball was outside, the ball was elsewhere, the ball was still going on, and it was anywhere that I wanted it to be, and it was up to me to take to the floor, to take photographs,

and long live freedom! I followed the rhythm of freedom, with or without music, and for pleasure, the pleasure of seeing even before the pleasure of taking the photograph, one can exist without the other and in any case I've always known that I haven't seen anything until I've seen beyond appearances. I've always known that I have to close my eyes before opening them and that when my eye made choices, it was no longer completely my own; it was younger than I was, it was seeing for the first time, it was discovering what I already knew in my soul and unconscious mind. I've always known that I didn't know what I was looking for, that the quest was more important than the prize, that this was enough to keep me going and that I only had to keep putting one foot in front of the other, moving in funny circles, feeling as if I am always turning rather than going forwards, and now that I am trying to demonstrate what I've done, it's hard to choose what defines me – if defining is really the word. But it doesn't really matter. A fashion photographer I am and remain, I can say that for certain, but I also take photographs without any particular aim in mind, photographs of everything and nothing, things that look good to me or that don't look good. I wander, but wandering is not so different from dancing. Things have come full circle, and while there's still time, and for as long as I can, I want to dance. I want to see, I want to take photographs, and all kinds of dancing are allowed...

Sarah Moon

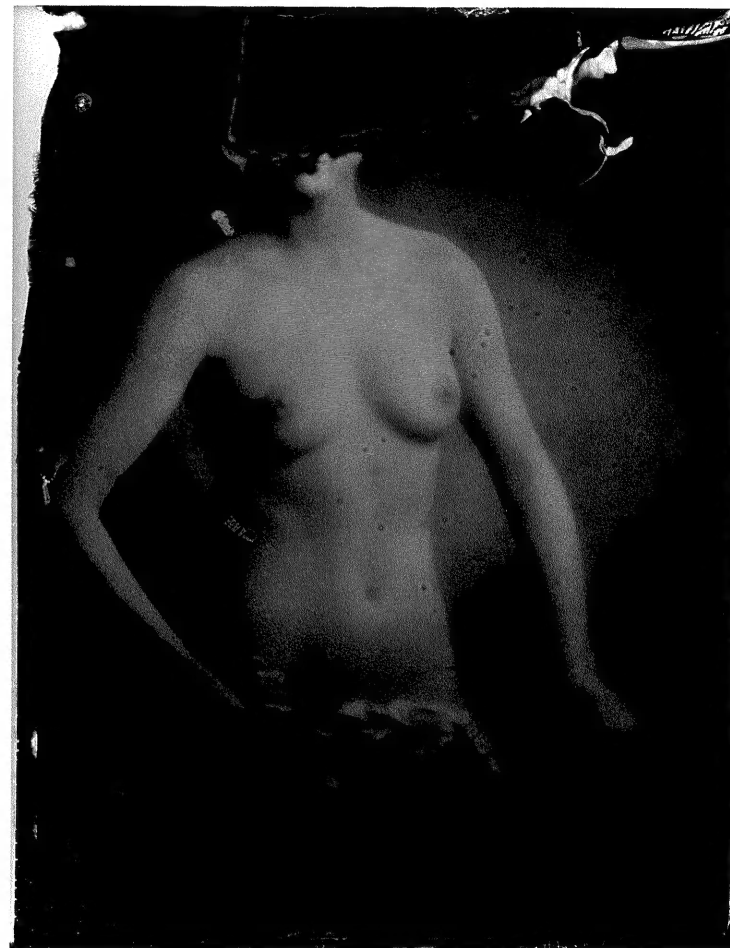


1. Old graces never die, *Nova*, 1972.





2. Information, 1981.



3. Nude, 1977.

Overleaf:

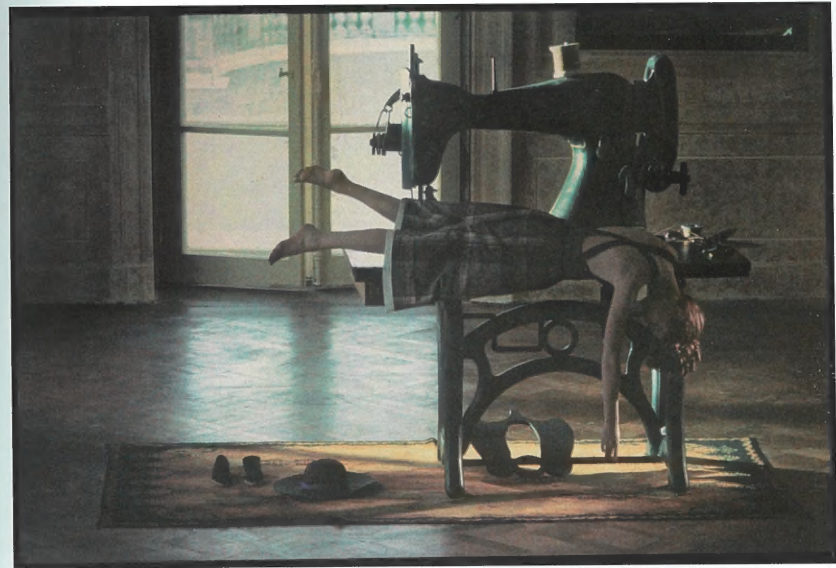
4. Sonia Rykiel, *Vogue UK*, 1976.



5. Cacharel, 1982.

Overleaf:

6. For *Nova*, 1971.







7. Cacharel, 1977.

Overleaf:

8. Suzanne in the Tuileries, US calendar, 1974.







9. A field of umbelliferae, 1993.





10. Sunday in Grizy, 1987.



11. Summer, 1989.

Overleaf:

12. Paule Monory, 1996.





13. Dior, *Marie Claire Bis*, 1990.

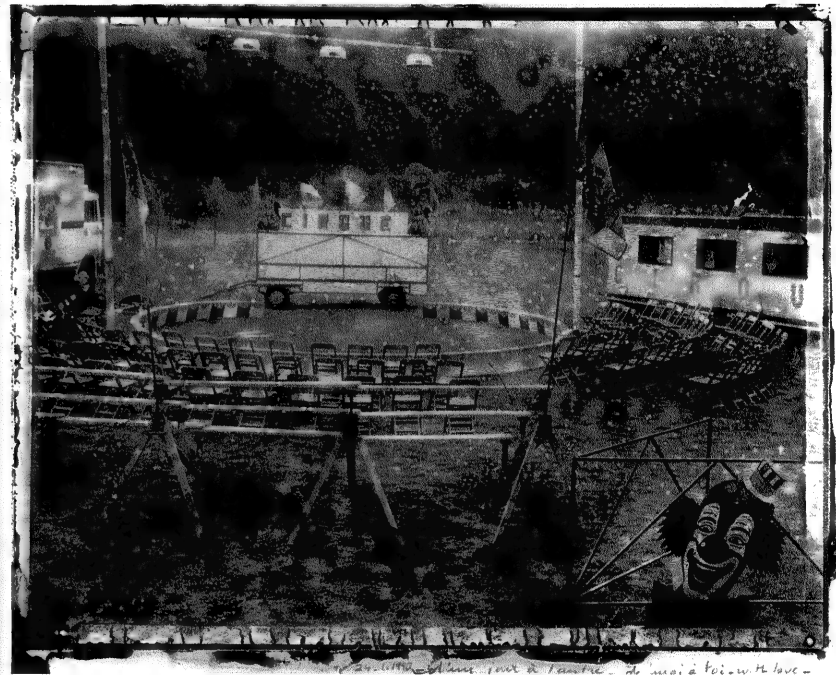


14. The Jardin du Luxembourg, Paris, 1985.

15. Villecroze, 1988.

Overleaf:

16. New York, 1989.







17. 18 July 1989.



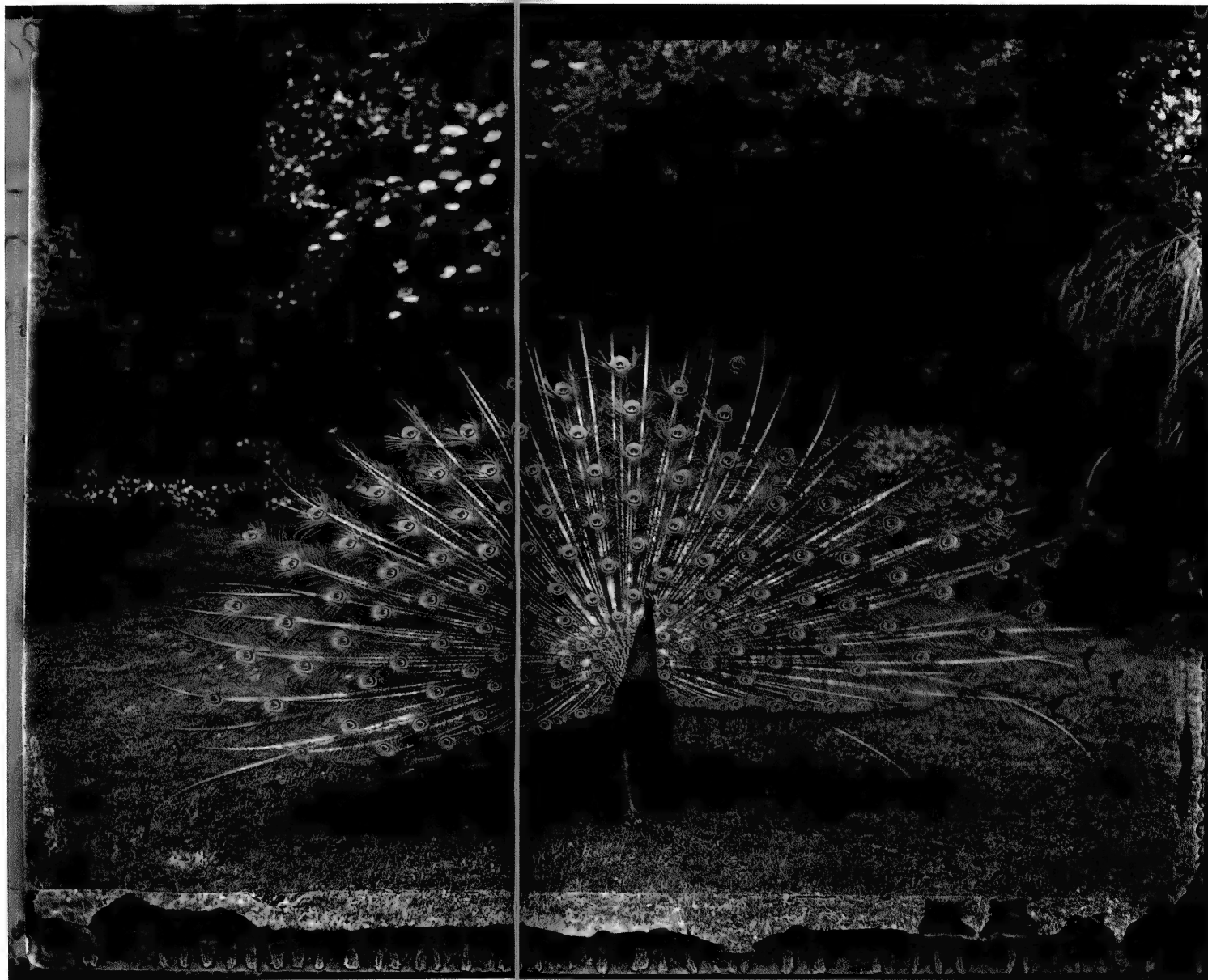


18. Antwerp, 1990.



19. Masako, Romeo Gigli, 1989.

Overleaf:  
20. Bagatelle, 1989.



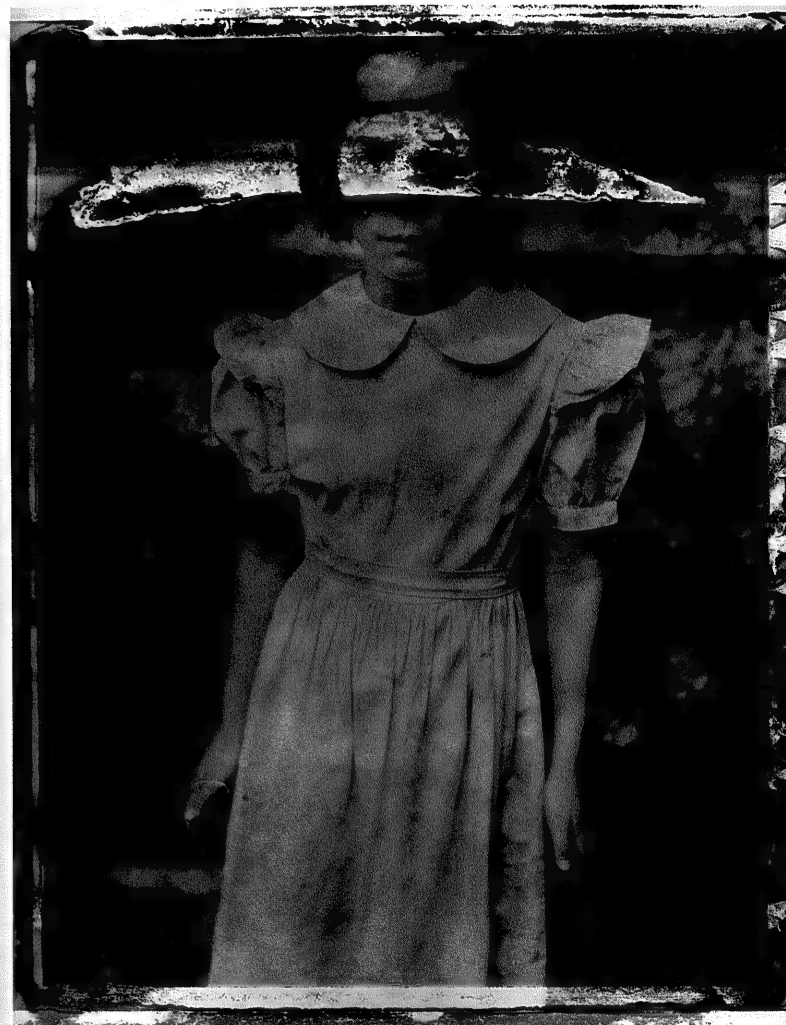


21. Pear tree, 1992.





22. Nîmes, 1994.



23. Pauline, 1990.

Overleaf:  
 24. Morgan, 1984.

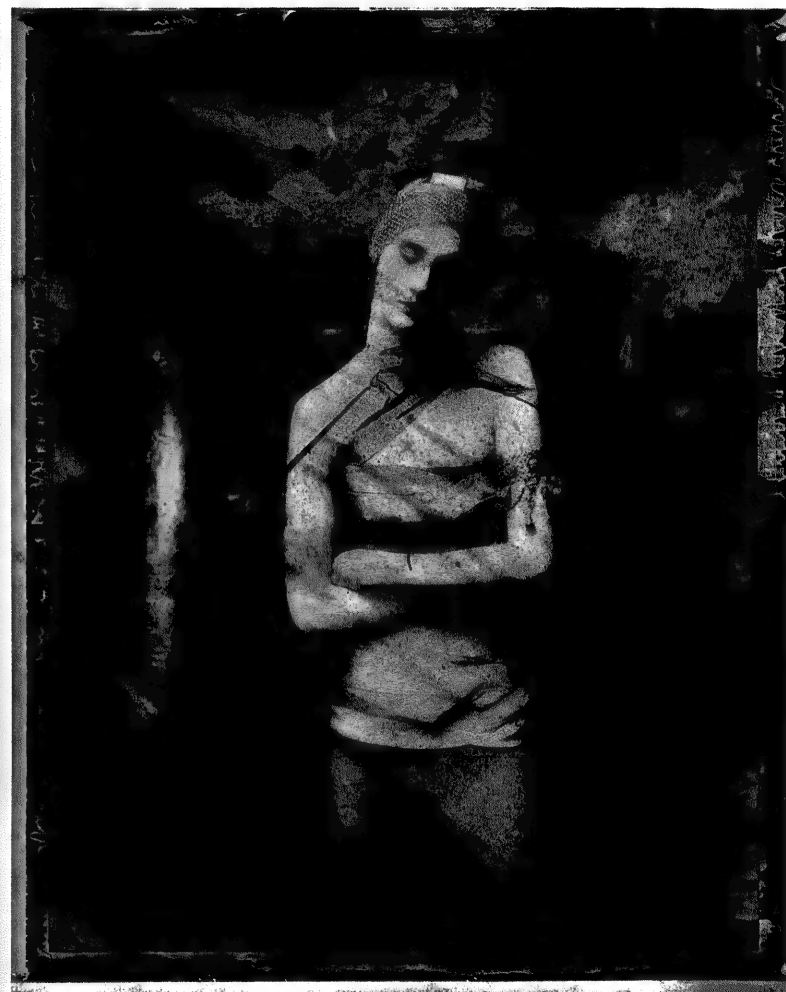




25. Laced-up back, *Marie Claire Bis*, 1989.



26. Turkish Delight, 1993.



27. Sasha, Marie Claire Bis, 1989.

Overleaf:  
28. Varanasi, 2003.



29. Untitled I, 1989.







31. Spotted dress, 1996.



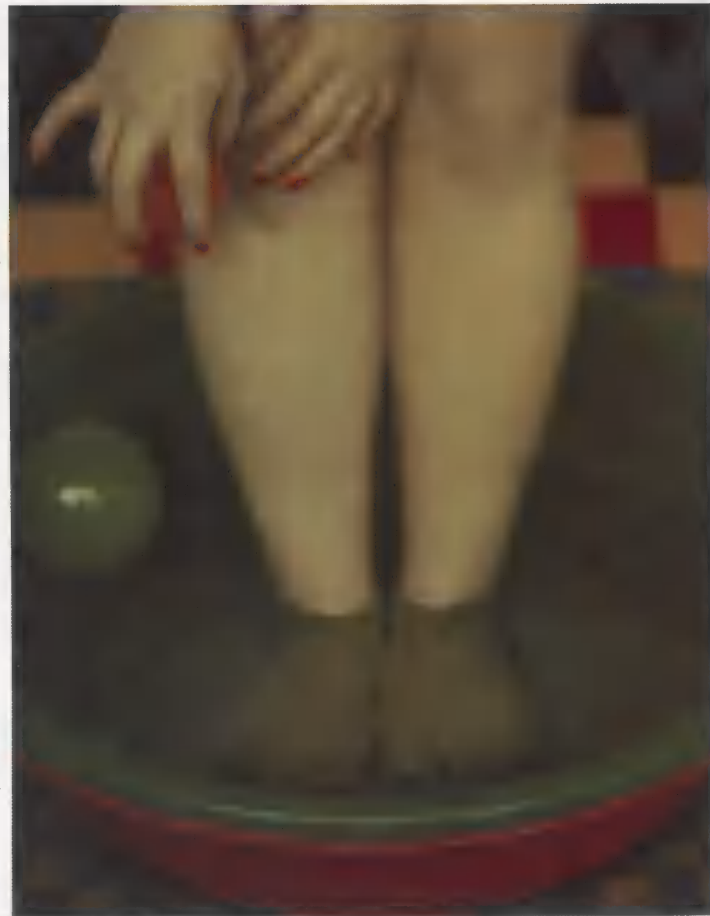
32. Monette for Comme des Garçons, 2008.



33. Poppy, 1987.



34. The bird I, 2000.



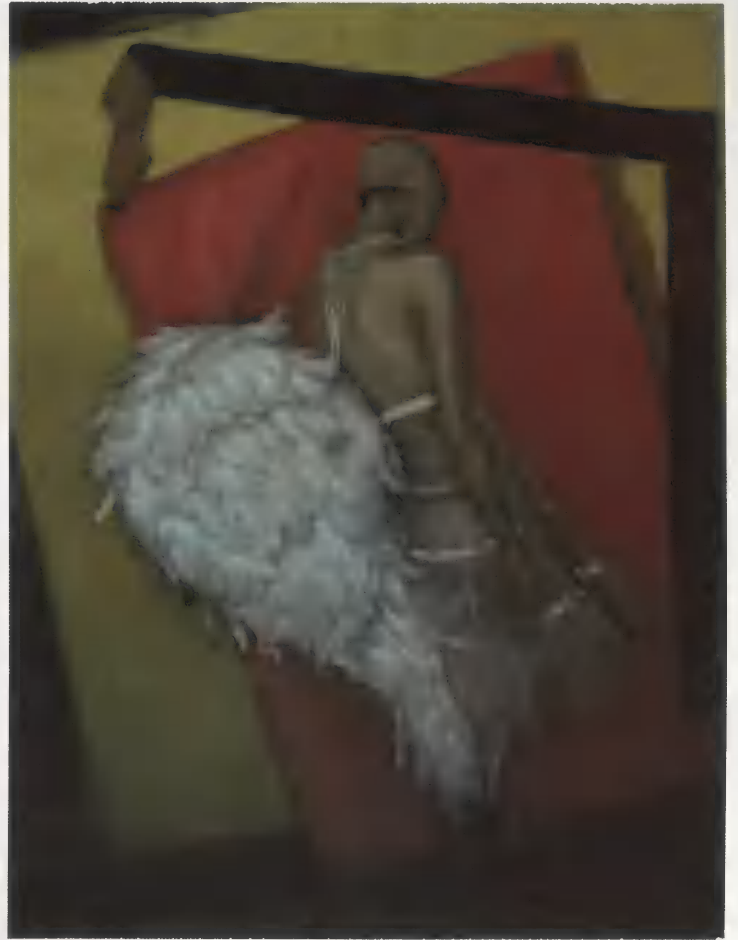
35. Footbath, 1999.





37. Angel of the studios, 2001.

Overleaf:  
38. Budapest, 1987.





39. Pascale and the turkey, 2000.

Overleaf:

40. The wheel of fortune, *Circuss*, 2002.







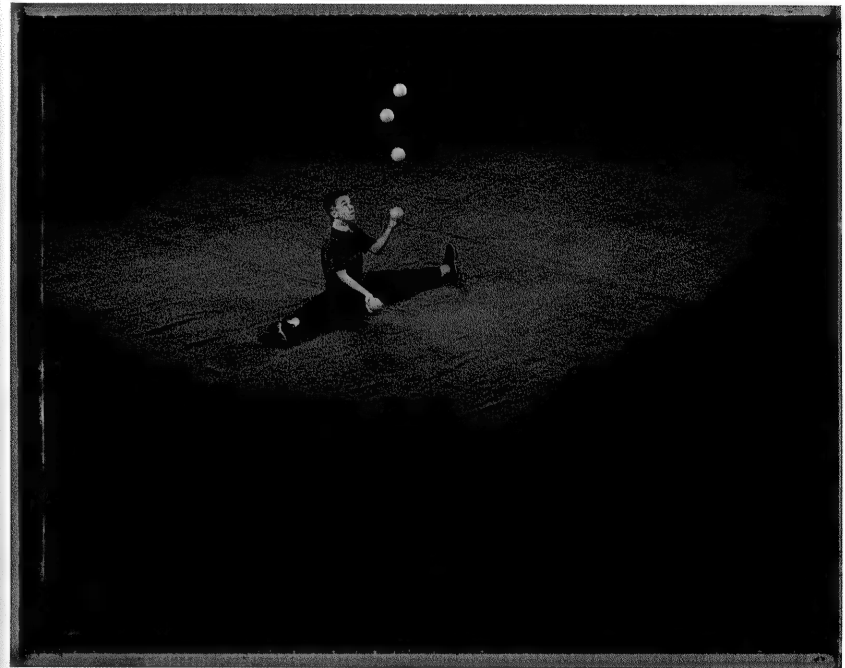


41. The elephant, *Circuss*, 1999.

42. The juggler, *Circuss*, 2002.

Overleaf:

43. The tightrope walker, 2003.





44. Yesterday's garlands, 2004.

Overleaf:

45. Cast shadows, 1992.









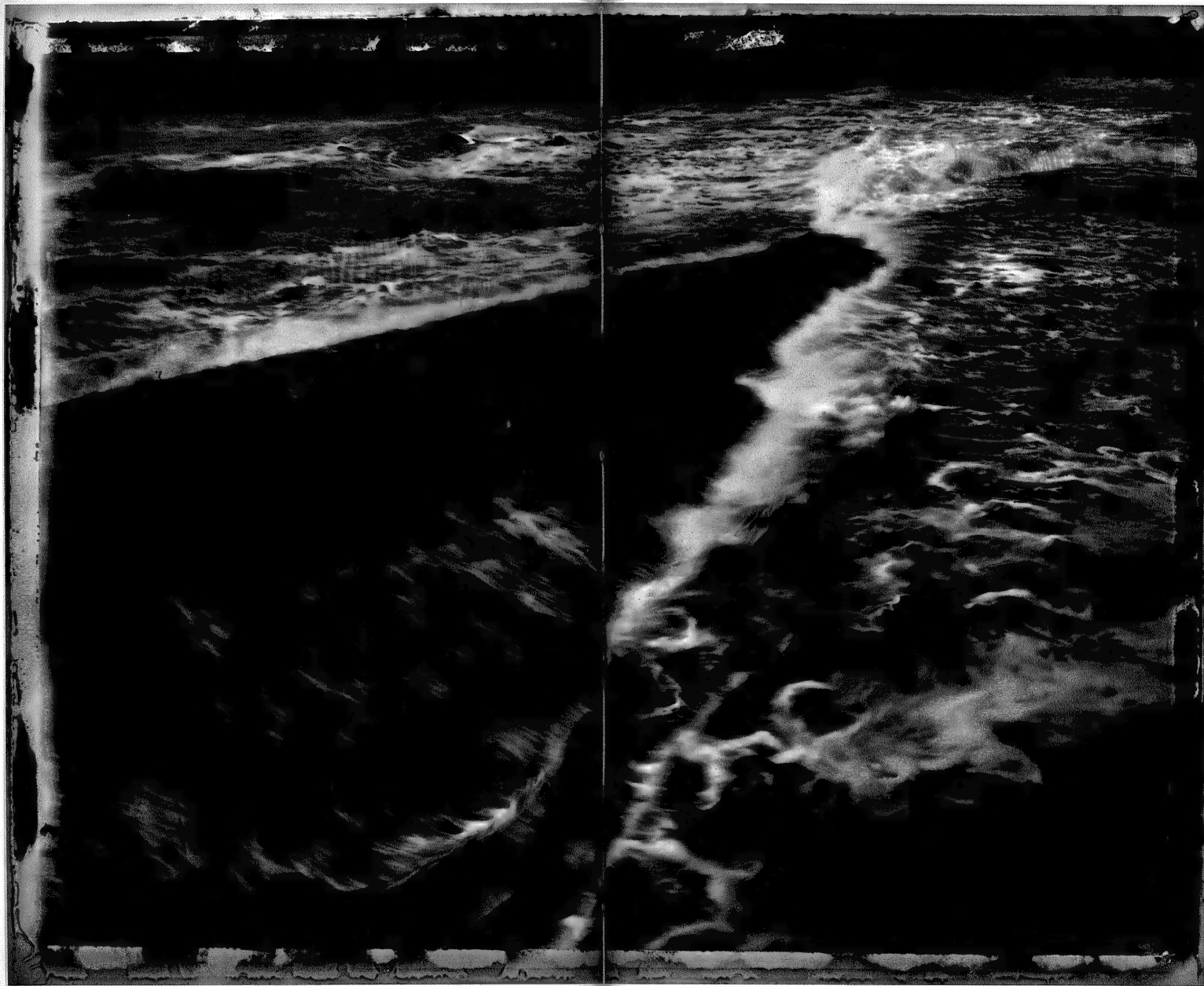
46. Tullamore, 1988.

47. Sasha Robertson, 1989.

Overleaf:

48. Ostend, 1990.





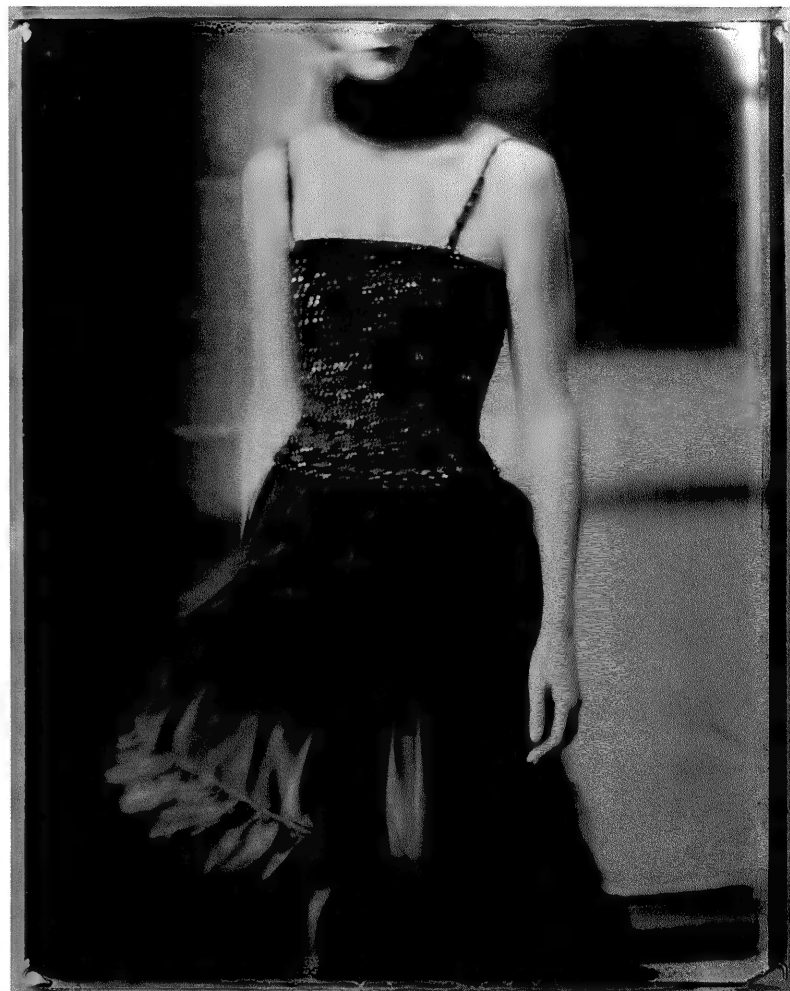


49. From my window, 1988.

50. Chanel, 1993.

Overleaf:

51. Maria's dogs, 2000.







52. Adrienne, Winter 2005.

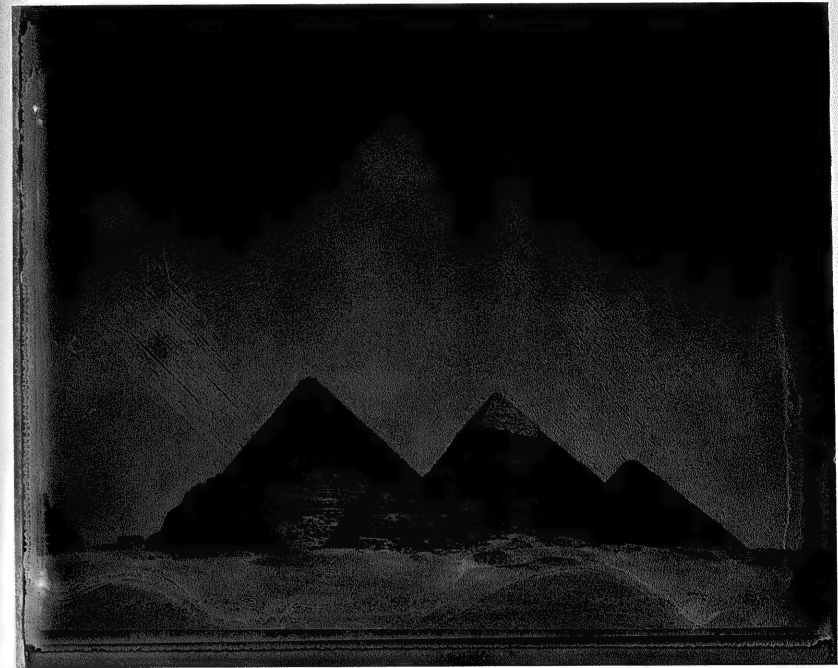


53. The clock, Hussein Chalayan, 1999.





54. Issey Miyake I, 1992.



55. Cairo, 1994.



56. Christina, 2008.



57. Issey Miyake II, 1992.



58. For L., 2005.

Overleaf:  
59. Villandry, 1994.





60. The dead swan, 2001.



61. Audrey, 1998.

Overleaf:

62. Against the wall, Comme des Garçons, 2001.







63. Exit, 1988.

Overleaf:

64. Next morning, 2010.





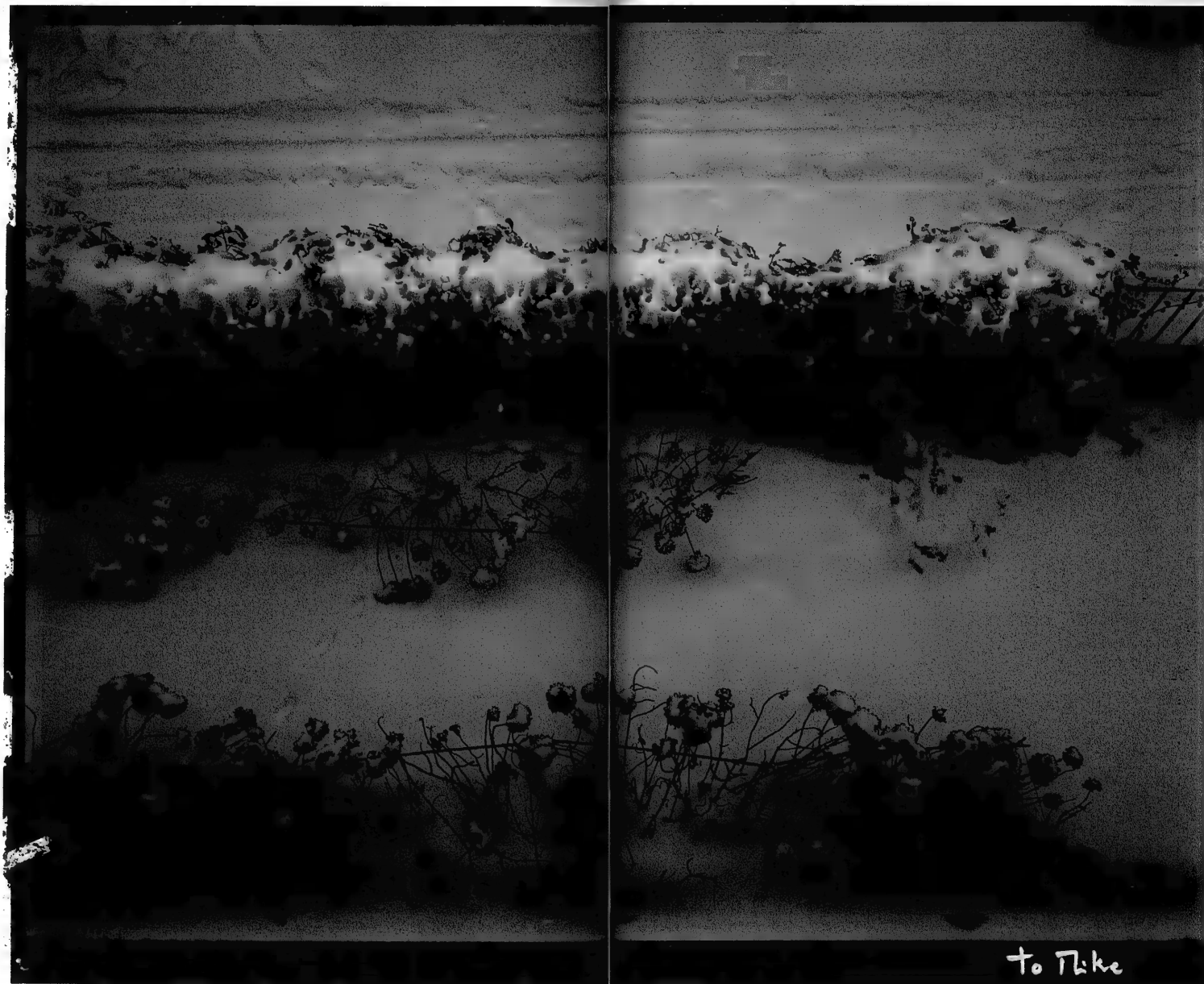


65. The ballgown, *Still*, 1999.

66. Untitled II, 1998.

Overleaf:  
67. To Mike, 1986.

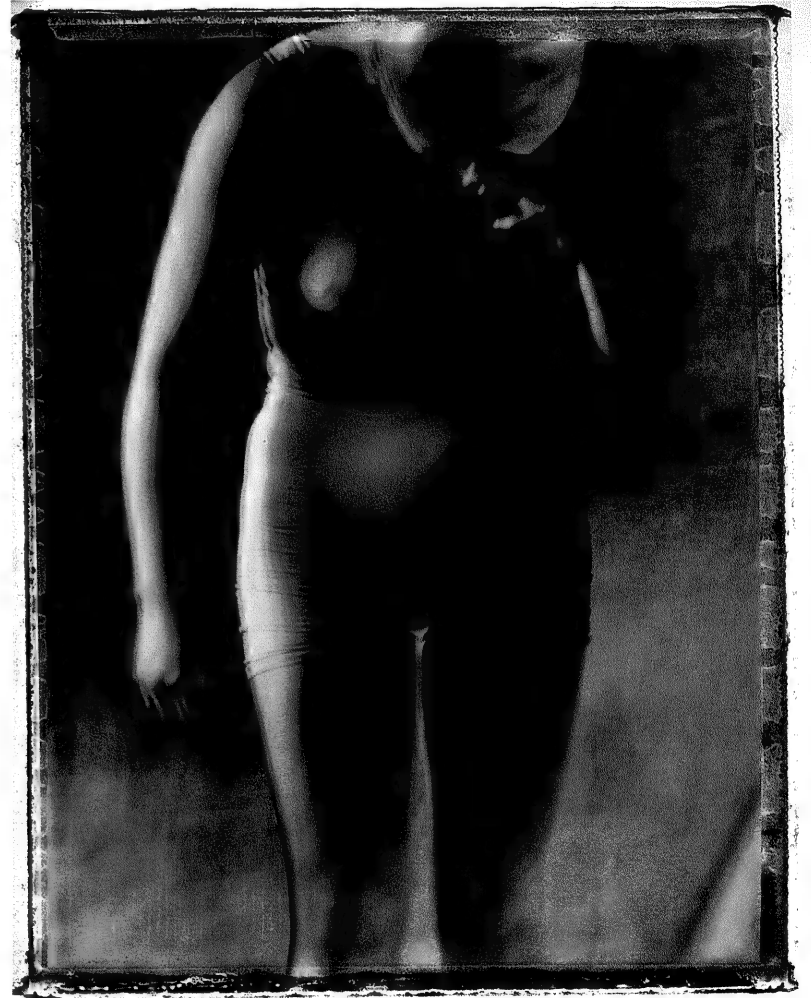




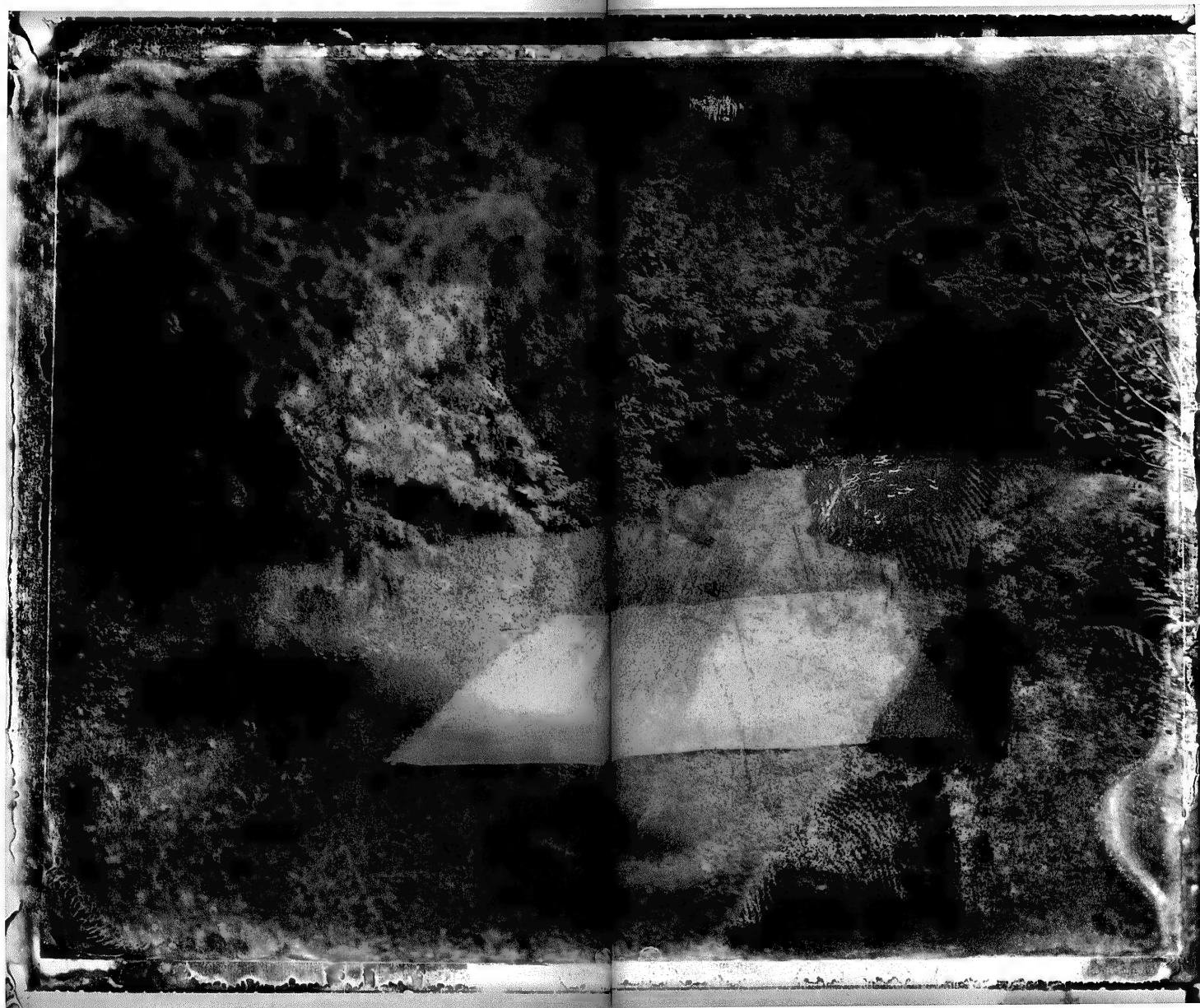
To Like

68. P.M., *Still*, 1999.

Overleaf:  
69. The boundary, 1986.









70. Anouk Grinberg, 1992.

71. Eva, Alexander McQueen, 1998.

Overleaf:

72. Five past five, 1990.





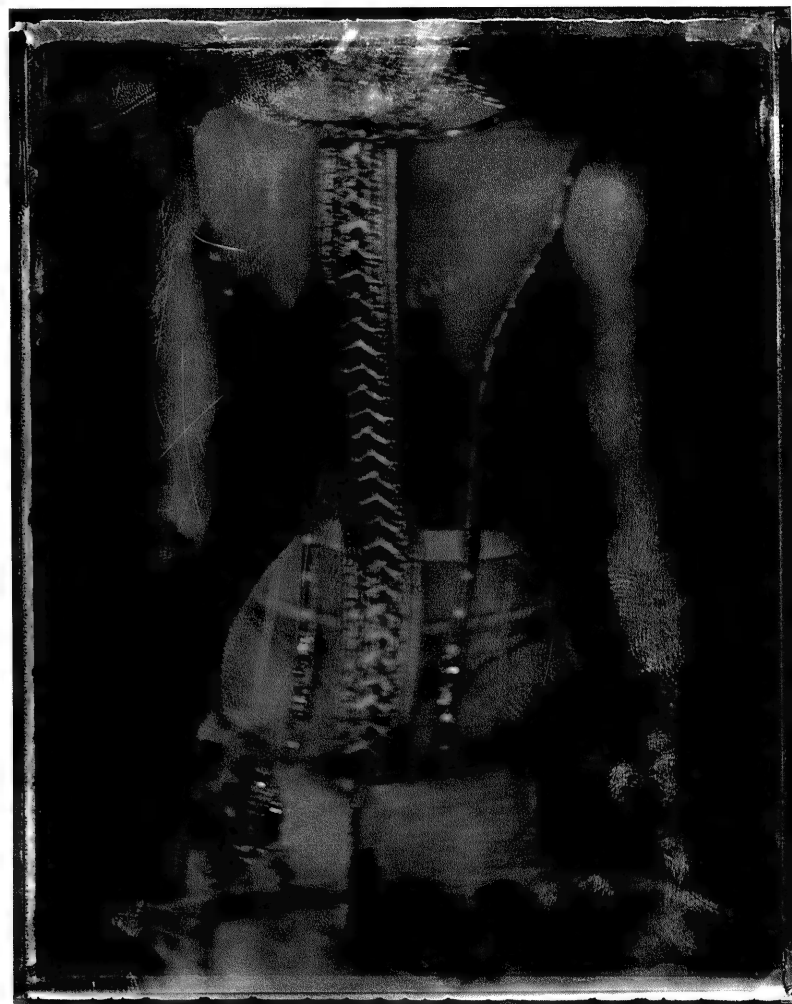


73. Natural history, 1995.

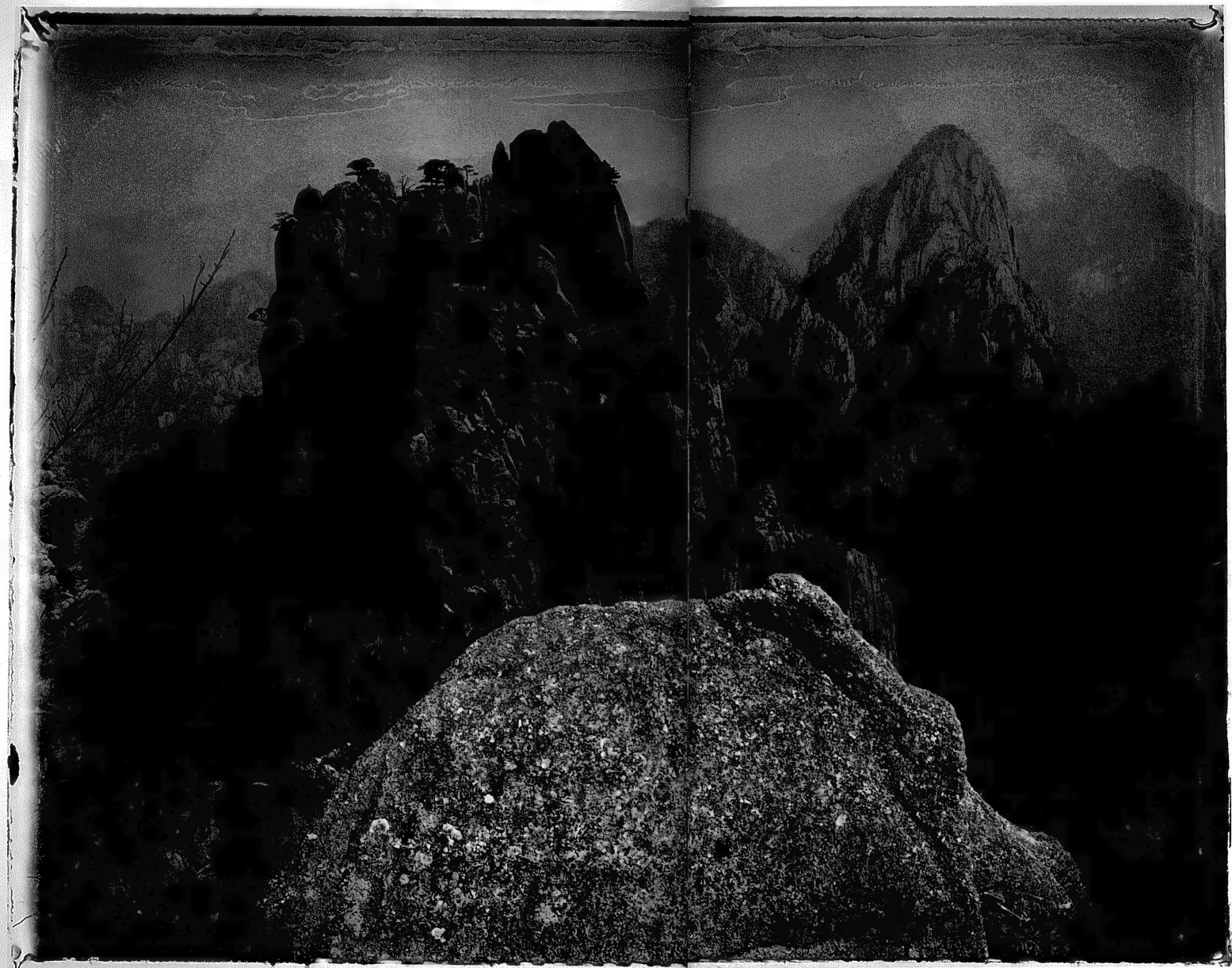
74. Anatomy I, Christian Lacroix, 1997.

Overleaf:

75. Huang Shan, 1996.





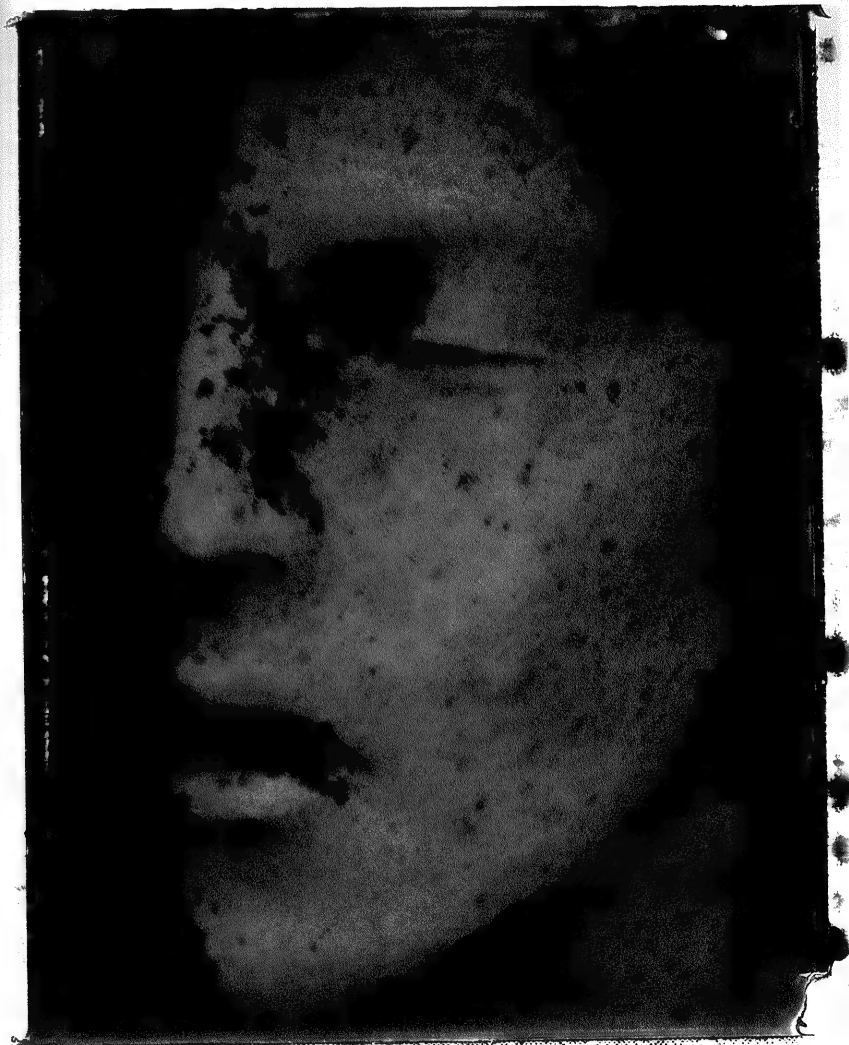




76. The statue, 1995.

Overleaf:

77. Noël in Portugal, 1999.





78. Julie Stouvenel, 1989.

Overleaf:

79. The seagull, 1998.





80. The bend, 1995.

Overleaf:

81. Icy wind, 2002.









## AFTERWORD

I know this work. I saw it being made. I saw the very first photographs that spoke of the charm of discovery, the wonder evoked by the magic of the process. Anything is possible, or almost anything. I saw Ingrid, Anne or Suzanne, time after time, waiting for a man, waiting for a letter or the end of the day. I saw the child shaking hands with the monkey and offering tea to the cat. I saw references to Lewis Carroll and Samuel Beckett, Fernand Khnopff and Henry Fuseli.

Yes, I saw this work being made. I saw naivety turning into skill, growing stronger, more diverse, more mature, but never chasing the anxiety away. It is the privilege of sharing a daily life to see the peaks of enthusiasm and the depths of distress, to see how dreams are given a face and how hopeless the quest for beauty really is.

Yes, a body of work, a mixture of intuition, rigour and obstinacy. A roving mind, an imagination that knows no obstacles and no rest. Not simply a refusal, but a complete inability to compromise.

A talent, one that is recognized all over the world. Still images or motion pictures, the same attention is given to framing and light, sequence and music, the same concern for the relaxed rhythm of things, as if Fauré's *Ballade* had been written just for her.

A career without equivocation or pretences. But at the moment of recognition, the time of awards and medals and trophies of all kinds, she became suddenly aware that she is not obliged to remake the world, by hand and in her own way; she can simply look at her garden under the snow, she can open the door of the studio and see without inventing.

She began to dream of trees as she had dreamed of women, she took pathways that only led back to herself, she hung stars in a rainy sky, and the fields that she crossed welcomed a menagerie of strange creatures. Quickly she grew to understand that she could not show what she sees, but that she could tell what she sees, and grow comfortable with reality, as she has always done.

From this, unexpected images were born. After having played so much with shifting forms and uncertain lines, with the blurring of time and light, she came to enjoy marking the lines, outlining the edges, saturating the colours.

But in her photographs there will always be a delicacy that is hers alone. There will never be any simpering or complacency in the gaze that she casts on women. And she will always be astonished when a bird flies out of depths of the sea and the mists of time to look her in the eye and show off its plumage.

Robert Delpire

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Sarah Moon, born in 1941, photographer since 1970 (fashion, advertising, personal projects), filmmaker since 1978.

### Solo exhibitions

**1982** *Souvenirs improbables*, Galerie Delpire, Paris.

**1983** International Center of Photography, New York.

**1989** Printemps Ginza, Tokyo.

**1993** Staley-Wise Gallery, New York.

**1994** Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie, Arles.

**1995** Retrospective, Centre National de la Photographie, Paris.  
Fotogalería del Teatro San Martín, Buenos Aires.

**1996** Fotografie Forum, Frankfurt.  
Dresden, Germany.  
Galleria Carla Sozzani, Milan.

**1997** Navio Museum of Art, Osaka.  
Universidad de Salamanca, Spain.  
12th International Fashion and Photography Festival, Hyères.  
Photography Club, Tarbes, France.

**1998** Weinstein Gallery, Minneapolis.  
Camera Work Gallery, Berlin.

**1999** Jane Corkin Gallery, Toronto.

**2000** Weinstein Gallery, Minneapolis.

**2001** House of Photography, Moscow.  
Michael Hoppen Gallery, London.  
Zelda Cheate Gallery, London.  
Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York.

**2002** Galleria Carla Sozzani, Milan.  
Kahitsukan Museum of Contemporary Art, Kyoto.  
Bibliothèque Jules Verne, Pantin, France.

**2003** Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris.  
Hôtel des Arts, Toulon, France.  
Camera Obscura, Paris.

**2004** Howard Greenberg Gallery, New York.  
Kahitsukan Museum of Contemporary Art, Kyoto.

**2005** Maison du Danemark, Paris.  
Camera Obscura, Paris.  
Michael Hoppen Gallery, London.  
*Three Tales*, Le Méjan, Rencontres d'Arles.  
*Circuss*, Copenhagen.  
Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai.  
*Circuss*, *The Screech Owl*, Orly, France.

**2006** National Museum (NAMOC), Beijing.  
*Le Fil rouge*, Le Méjan, Arles;  
Galleria Carla Sozzani, Milan,

**2007** *The Mermaid of Auderville*, House of Photography, Moscow.  
*Little Red Riding Hood*, Manoir de Kernault, Mennac, France.  
*Circuss*, Box Galerie, Brussels.

**2008** *Circuss*, Leica Gallery, Prague.  
*1 2 3 4 5*, Royal College of Art, London.  
*1 2 3 4 5*, Michael Hoppen Gallery, London.  
Galerie zur Stockeregg, Zurich.  
Camera Obscura, Paris.

**2009** Seoul Arts Center, South Korea.

**2010** *Si jamais*, Maison René Char, Lisle-sur-la-Sorgue, France.

**2011** *1 2 3 4 5*, Fotografiska, Stockholm.  
*1 2 3 4 5*, Le Botanique, Brussels.  
*1 2 3 4 5*, Palais de la Photographie, Nice.  
*Le Fil rouge*, Centre Culturel François Mitterrand, Périgueux, France.  
Fahey/Klein Gallery, Los Angeles.  
Galerie Persiehl & Heine, Hamburg.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books by Sarah Moon

*Souvenirs improbables / Improbable Memories*, Paris: Delpire, 1980

*Sarah Moon*, Tokyo: Pacific Press Service, 1984

*Le Petit Chaperon Rouge / Little Red Riding Hood*, Paris: Editions Grasset; Mankato, MN: Creative Editions, 1986

*Vrais semblants*, Paris: Delpire, 1991

*Inventario 1985-1997*, Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1997

*Sarah Moon: Photo Poche*, Paris: Editions Nathan, 1999

*Still*, Minneapolis: Weinstein Gallery, 2000

*Coincidences*, Paris: Delpire; London: Thames & Hudson; Santa Fe, NM: Arena Editions, 2001

*Danse, Dansez...*, Paris: Editions Les Solitaires intempestifs, 2002

*Circuss*, Kyoto: Kahitsukan Museum of Contemporary Art, 2003

*L'Effraie / The Screech Owl*, Kyoto: Kahitsukan Museum of Contemporary Art, 2004

*Le Fil rouge / The Red Thread*, Kyoto: Kahitsukan Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005

*La Sirène d'Auderville / The Mermaid of Auderville*, Kyoto: Kahitsukan Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007

*Sarah Moon 1 2 3 4 5*, Paris: Delpire; London: Thames & Hudson, 2008; also Italian and Japanese editions

*Teatro Regio*, Rome: Contrasto, 2009

*Le Petit Chaperon Noir / Black Riding Hood*, Kyoto: Kahitsukan Museum of Contemporary Art, 2010

### Work in magazines

*Elle*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Graphis*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Marie Claire*, *Nova*, *Photo*, *Zoom*, *Time-Life*, *Vogue*, *Glamour*, *AD*, *Numéro*, and more.

## AWARDS

**1972** DADA Gold and Silver, New York.

**1978** Club des directeurs artistiques, Paris.

**1979** Golden Lion, Advertising Films, Cannes, Cacharel.

**1983** ASMP, New York, Outstanding Achievement in Fashion Photography.

**1984** Clio Award, New York.

**1985** Gold Award for Applied Photography, ICP, New York.

**1986** Golden Lion, Advertising Films, Cannes.

**1987** Golden Lion, Advertising Films, Cannes.

**1989** Silver Lion, Advertising Films, Cannes.

**1991** Women's Film Prize, feature film, Marseille, *Mississippi One*.

**1994** FIPA d'Or, Cannes, for *Contacts*.

**1995** Grand Prix de la Photographie, Paris.

**1996** BFF Award, Germany.

**2005** Martell Prize, Shanghai.

**2006** Lucy Award, New York.

**2007** Prix du Public, Moscow.

**2008** Grand Prize from the German Photography Society, GMBPH, Berlin.

**2008** Prix Nadar, awarded by the association Gens d'Image (Paris), for the book *1 2 3 4 5*.

**2009** Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, France

## FILMS

150 commercials (Dim, L'Oréal, Cacharel, TWA, Dupont, Revlon, etc.)

**1990** *Mississippi One*, Take Five Productions.

**1994** *Contacts*, CNP, La Sept, KS Vision.

**1995** *Henri Cartier-Bresson, Point d'interrogation*, Take Five Productions.

**1995** *À propos d'une exposition*, CNP.

**1996** *Lumière et compagnie*, Cineteve Productions.

**2000** *'J'ai choisi cette photo...'*, Musée Niépce - Riff Productions.

**2002** *There Is Something About Lillian* (Lillian Bassman), MEP/Franco American/Take Five Productions.

**2002** *Circuss*, Take Five Productions.

**2003** *André François, L'Artiste*, Take Five Productions.

**2004** *L'Effraie / The Screech Owl*, Take Five Productions.

**2005** *Le Fil rouge / The Red Thread*, Take Five Productions.

**2007** *La Sirène d'Auderville / The Mermaid of Auderville*, Take Five Productions.

**2009** *Robert Delpire, le montreur d'images*, MEP/Franco American/Take Five Productions.

**2010** *Le Petit Chaperon Noir / Black Riding Hood*, Take Five Productions.



82. The marabout, 2002.

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